

freshmen colleagues, he is keeping us from keeping our promises.

It is unfortunate that this impasse has been reached and that nonessential Federal employees are being sent home, but it would be a tragedy of historic proportions if we were to back down now on our commitment to keep the promises that we made and to keep the promises that he made.

Madam Speaker, we must not turn back now. I think the American people are counting on us to keep our promises, to do what we said, to change the way Government does business and to make the Government live within its means.

CONGRATULATIONS TO PRESIDENT CLINTON FOR VETOING CR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I learned this morning that the President had exercised his veto to prevent an increase in Medicare premiums for our Nation's elderly by vetoing the continuing resolution early this morning. Again, Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the President on doing that, because if he were to allow the Medicare premiums to rise, it would be the beginning of this whole process that the Republican leadership is trying to impose on the American people where Medicare premiums and costs rise, the program is cut back, and Medicare ceases to be the effective health care program for the elderly that it has been in the past.

I think also it was significant because last night there was a private meeting where Republicans heard the details of the much-awaited budget compromise bill. I was appointed by the Democrats as a conferee on the budget reconciliation. As has been the case with all budget matters this year, as well as with the Medicare issue, the Republicans meet in secret and do not have meetings with the Democrats and the Republicans together to try to resolve their differences on the budget.

Madam Speaker, it has characterized the Medicare debate from the very beginning, when there were not hearings, when we were asked to vote on bills in committee within 24 hours or even the very morning when the bills were sent to us, and there was no serious debate, there was no effort to have a hearing; and now, in dealing with the budget and hammering out a bill that will come to the floor probably today or tomorrow or Thursday, once again, the Republican leadership has excluded the Democrats.

Why do they do that? Well, they do it because they do not want the public to know what is happening with Medicare and Medicaid. They know what they are doing is taking money from Medicare and from Medicaid in order to pay for tax cuts, primarily for wealthy

Americans and large corporations, and they know that if there are actual meetings or conferences with the Democrats on some of these issues, that we will hammer the point home, that they need to eliminate some of these cuts in Medicare, that they need to eliminate these increased premiums in Medicare if they want to have a budget, and if they want to balance the budget over 7 years in a way that does not hurt seniors, that does not hurt the average American.

Unfortunately, that is not what is happening, and once again, we are faced with the reality that today the Government is partially shut down because the Republicans want to make an issue over Medicare.

Madam Speaker, I want to read this quote again which I carry around with me from Speaker GINGRICH where he says, "Now, we didn't get rid of Medicare in round one because we don't think that is politically smart and we don't think that that is the right way to go through a transition, but we believe it is going to wither on the vine because we think people are voluntarily going to leave it."

That is what this is all about, and it is to the credit of President Clinton that he does not allow us to go down that slippery slope and that he vetoed these increases in the Medicare premiums, because if he allowed that to happen, if he allowed those premiums to go upon January 1, it would be the beginning of this Republican effort to cut Medicare in order to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and the beginning of the end for the Medicare Program.

PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS AT AN IMPASSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. NORWOOD] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, today the Federal Government will shut down, and later this week, the Federal Government will reach its debt limit. Congress has passed bills to continue spending and to raise the debt limit, but the President has vetoed them. So here we are at an impasse.

Madam Speaker, I am not at all happy it has come to this. I am concerned for the people who will be inconvenienced by the Government shut-down. I am very concerned that some Americans may lose faith in the way we do business here in Washington. I sincerely wish it had not come to this.

But, Madam Speaker, we have no choice. The Federal Government is \$4.9 trillion in debt. It is immoral for us to continue to borrow from the future of our children. We must take the steps necessary to balance the budget. We Republicans have laid out a plan to reach a balanced budget by the year 2002. We have done so by cutting spending. We have done so while cutting taxes, not raising them. We have done

so while making the hard choices necessary to save Medicare from bankruptcy. We have done so with no help whatsoever from the liberal Democrats in Congress or the President.

Yet here we are Madam Speaker, out of money and at the limit of our debt. Why has the President vetoed both of our efforts to avoid this crisis? I have been listening to his remarks with great interest.

The President said he vetoed the debt limit extension because he did not want to be constrained by our budget priorities. For those of you who do not understand political gobbledygook that means the President does not want to balance the budget in 7 years using CBO scoring.

The President vetoed the continuing resolution because he does not want to raise Medicare part B premiums; he wants to see them lowered. Perhaps the President has forgotten his trustees report. Medicare is going bankrupt. Lowering part B premiums does not make Medicare more solvent. Arguing over Medicare premiums is simply political posturing; it has nothing to do with governing. If you really want to save Medicare, you have to be prepared to make hard choices. The President is apparently not ready.

Madam Speaker, I have heard the network newscast constantly refer to this budget crisis as some form of game. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are fighting to save the future of this country. This is no game. We Republicans simply refuse to proceed any further with politics as usual. We will not continue the mindless spending and borrowing that is bankrupting our children's future and destroying any hope they have of achieving the American Dream. We will not vote to extend the debt limit or continue the spending of the Federal Government with a commitment from the President to balance the budget.

Madam Speaker as of today, we have no such commitment from the President. He continues to play politics with Medicare while the system goes bankrupt. He refuses to accept CBO scoring, even though CBO scoring was good enough for him when the Democrats controlled Congress. He refuses to discuss specific cuts he will consider, instead he just snipes at Congress for being too harsh on education and the environment. What is it we are doing that he refuses to accept? Is the President against risk-assessment to make regulations more reasonable? Is the President against habeas corpus reforms that will halt the endless death row appeals? It is time for the President to quit campaigning and start governing.

Madam Speaker, I take no joy in seeing the Government closed down today. But this is a step we must take if we are to reach a balanced budget and save our children's future.